

BEING REAL WITH GOD

I. A real relationship with God is possible

...worship the Lord, for he is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you. Exodus 34:14 NLT

DISCUSSION: What has your relationship with God felt like in the past? How would you describe some of your typical experiences of God?

II. A real relationship with God is beneficial

Throw all your worry on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 ISV

God said, "I will never fail you. I will never forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 NLT

DISCUSSION: Do you feel loved and cared for by God? In what way do you wish He loved and cared for you more? Where do you feel let down by Him?

III. A real relationship with God is difficult to develop

Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel. Isaiah 45:15 NIV

DISCUSSION: What do you believe it takes to have a "real" relationship with God? How does that parallel or differ from other "real" relationships you have? What do you feel is missing from that list of attributes of a real relationship?

DISCUSSION: Have you poured into your relationship with God proportionately to what you've received? Are you willing to talk to God about what you want from Him? Are willing to talk about your disappointments as well as your excitements?

If I am going to develop real intimacy with God I must break through five relational barriers.

1. Selfishness- I have to love God more than myself

Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38 NLT

DISCUSSION: How have you been selfish in your relationship with God?

2. Individualism- I have to experience God in Christian community

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16 NLT

DISCUSSION: How are you growing in your relationship with God while in community?

So much of what we seek in God is found in each other!

DISCUSSION: In what way are you willing to allow God to meet you and be in real relationship with you through and in the life of another believer?

3. Academia- I must desire Jesus not just new information

“You study the scriptures, because you think in them you will find eternal life. And these very scriptures speak about me! Yet you are not willing to come to me in order to have life! John 5:39-40 GNAT

DISCUSSION: Do you ever focus more on your knowledge or Christian activity more than the actual relationship you have with God?

4. Worldliness- I must choose to live for what lasts

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. James 4:8 NLT

DISCUSSION: If others were to look at your life and describe that which you live for, what would they say?

5. Arrogance- I can only meet God on my knees

Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Luke 18:9-14 NLT

PRAYER PROJECT: Take 5-7 minutes alone with God, and have an open and real conversation with God about how this small group discussion has made you feel. Then take another 5-7 minutes alone with God, and ask Him to what degree is your regular prayer life a reflection of authentic conversation and what degree is fake. Share with your group.